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**TESTIMONY RE: H.B. 5288 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING  
CIRCULATING NURSES**

**Public Health Committee**

**March 1, 2010**

Good Morning Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams, chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and chair of nursing at the University of Hartford. I have practiced nursing for over 40 years and have been educating nurses in Connecticut for 35 years.

I am providing testimony in support **H.B. 5288 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CIRCULATING NURSES**

The perioperative RN, through professional and patient-centered expertise, is the primary patient advocate in the operating room and is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the patient's condition. The presence of the RN in the circulating role throughout each surgical procedure is essential for timely delivery of quality surgical care and optimal patient outcomes. It is the right of the patient to receive the highest quality nursing care during this most critical period. No other person is more knowledgeable or qualified to handle the multiple critical issues surrounding patient safety in the operating room than the registered nurse (RN) who is specifically trained in perioperative nursing ( AORN, 2008)

The circulating nurse is responsible for managing all nursing care within the operating suite, observing the surgical team from a broad perspective, and assisting the team to create and maintain a safe, comfortable environment for the patient's surgery. The circulating nurse ensures that all members of the surgical team perform in a united effort. By employing critical thinking, assessment, diagnosing, outcome identification, planning, and evaluation skills, RN circulators direct the nursing care and coordinate activities of the surgical team for the benefit of the patient, whose protective reflexes or self-care abilities are compromised by the operative procedure and anesthetic. These critical nursing functions of the RN circulator are not delegable in the operating room (AORN, 2008).

Perioperative nursing is a specialized area of nursing practice. As a fundamental member of the surgical team, the perioperative RN works in collaboration with other health care professionals including the surgeon, anesthesia provider, surgical assistant, surgical technologists and other assistive personnel. The perioperative RN provides expert nursing care to surgical patients before, during, and after surgery. Perioperative nursing requires a unique and highly developed set of knowledge and skills, specialized training and education. In this specialty role, the perioperative RN is often the single advocate for the patient's safety during surgery (AORN, 2008).

Protecting patients during their most vulnerable periods of time is the responsibility of the surgical team. Having the correct practitioners working collaboratively is essential to safe patient care. This bill would require the utilization of the RN with specialty education and experience. It is essential to the provision of safe patient care during this critical period of time.

**We urge you to support H.B. 5288 An Act Concerning Circulating Nurses**